

**Fathers Matter Too!**  
*A Father's Place in Strengthening Families*  
May 15, 2008

**CONFERENCE EVALUATION  
SUMMARY**

194 people registered for the conference.  
159 people attended the conference.  
54 evaluations were completed. (33% return rate for those attending)

**Evaluation Results for the Major Conference Learning Objectives**

After your participation in the conference today, how would you rate the following items? The conference:	<b>AVERAGE SCORE</b> Excellent = 5.0; Very Good = 4.0; Good = 3.0; Fair = 2.0; Poor = 1.0
Raised awareness about fatherhood and the impact the crisis of fatherlessness is having on our community.	<b>4.26 (Very Good)</b>
Shared information and stimulated ideas about changes individuals and organizations can make in their programs/practice.	<b>4.09 (Very Good)</b>
Raised awareness about available resources, including faith community and identification of gaps in services and resources.	<b>3.94 (Very Good)</b>
Gathered comments and input from participants to utilize for future strategic planning by the Polk County Fathers and Families Coalition.	<b>3.67 (Good/Very Good)</b>

**Evaluation Results for the Conference Outcome Measures**

<b>Per Cent</b>	<b>OUTCOME MEASURE</b>
<b>82.1%</b>	Indicated that they increased their awareness about fatherhood issues and how involvement of fathers with the services they provide affects positive outcomes for children. (Exceeded expectation: Target was 70%-80%)
<b>100%</b>	Were exposed to information about available resources within the community through exposure to exhibits by community-based providers and round table discussions. (Met Expectations: Target was 100%)
<b>33.3%</b>	Indicated awareness about resources available within the community that they may have been previously unaware. (Exceeded Expectations: Target was 20%-30%)

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**Conference Evaluation**

Before you attended this conference, how would you have rated the following items?

	<b>Excellent (5)</b>	<b>Very Good (4)</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	<b>Fair (2)</b>	<b>Poor (1)</b>	<b>MEAN</b>
1. My awareness about fatherhood and how involvement of fathers with the services my agency or I provide affects positive outcomes for children.	3	22	19	9	1	<b>3.31</b>
2. My exposure to information about fatherhood.	1	13	22	14	4	<b>2.87</b>
3. My awareness about resources available within the community.	2	6	17	22	6	<b>2.55</b>
4. My professional knowledge and skill in relating to and engaging fathers.	2	16	18	15	2	<b>3.02</b>

After your participation today, how would you rate the following items?

	<b>Excellent (5)</b>	<b>Very Good (4)</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	<b>Fair (2)</b>	<b>Poor (1)</b>	<b>MEAN</b>
5. My awareness about fatherhood and how involvement of fathers with the services my agency or I provide affects positive outcomes for children.	18	26	10	0	0	<b>4.15</b>
6. My exposure to information about fatherhood.	12	32	9	1	0	<b>4.02</b>
7. My awareness about resources available within the community.	10	24	15	3	1	<b>3.74</b>
8. My professional knowledge and skill in relating to and engaging fathers.	11	24	15	3	0	<b>3.81</b>

How did this conference meet the following objectives?

	<b>Excellent (5)</b>	<b>Very Good (4)</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	<b>Fair (2)</b>	<b>Poor (1)</b>	<b>MEAN</b>
9. Raised awareness about fatherhood and the impact the crisis of fatherlessness is having on our community.	20	28	4	1	0	<b>4.26</b>
10. Shared information and stimulated ideas about changes individuals and organizations can make in their programs/practice.	19	25	6	1	2	<b>4.09</b>
11. Raised awareness about available resources, including faith community and identification of gaps in services and resources.	15	26	8	2	2	<b>3.94</b>
12. Gathered comments and input from participants to utilize for future strategic planning by the Polk County Fathers and Families Coalition.	11	20	15	2	3	<b>3.67</b>

Overall Evaluation of this conference:

	<b>Excellent (5)</b>	<b>Very Good (4)</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	<b>Fair (2)</b>	<b>Poor (1)</b>	<b>NA (0)</b>	<b>MEAN</b>
1. Overall quality.	18	23	10	1	0		<b>4.12</b>
2. Conference content.	16	22	11	2	0		<b>4.04</b>
3. My expectations were met.	15	20	12	5	0		<b>3.87</b>
4. The majority of the subjects covered were relevant to the work I am doing.	15	20	13	3	0	2	<b>3.92</b>
5. The presenters identified key issues and explained why they are important.	14	13	6	2			<b>4.11</b>
a. Mark Perlman	29	20	4	1			<b>4.43</b>
b. Neil Tift	28	21	4	1			<b>4.49</b>
c. Lisa Nitsch	22	14	4	2			<b>4.44</b>
d. Local Panel	19	15	9	3	3		<b>3.90</b>
6. The conference facilitated knowledge sharing among participants.	13	21	10	8	1		<b>3.63</b>
7. This conference stretched my mind with new ideas regarding fatherhood and family services.	18	23	8	4			<b>4.04</b>

How would you rate the following?

	<b>Excellent (5)</b>	<b>Very Good (4)</b>	<b>Good (3)</b>	<b>Fair (2)</b>	<b>Poor (1)</b>	<b>MEAN</b>
8. Registration process.	25	17	5	5	2	<b>4.07</b>
9. Location.	30	12	10	2		<b>4.20</b>
10. Food and Beverage.	28	14	10	1		<b>4.21</b>
11. Time of year. Suggestion for better time of year:	24	15	9	2	1	<b>3.98</b>

Which one of the following categories best describe your involvement with the fatherhood issues:

2	Father	2	Criminal/Juvenile Justice
1	Family Member	2	Faith Community
13	Child Welfare		Business Partner
11	Educator	9	Other: Please Specify: VNS, Parent/Educator, CSRU, CASA, Domestic Violence
10	Community Outreach		

**What was the highlight or most beneficial aspect of the conference?**

- Networking & sharing ideas
- Networking. Seeing so many people "around the table"
- The guest speakers brought new ideas forth to consider
- Hearing from the national speakers. Great job.
- The two morning keynotes were awesome! I could've listened to them all day.
- Really enjoyed Mark Perleman's presentation
- Neil Tift & Mark Perleman
- The featured speakers
- Mark Perleman, Neil Tift
- Keynote Speakers
- Info presented by Mark Perlman
- Mark Perlman's discussion on absence of fathers. Neil Tift's assessment guide
- I really enjoyed Lisa Nitsch's presentation. I enjoyed all of the resources.
- When Mark spoke about the stats & his program
- Mark Perlman's analogy of basketball goals & rules as applied to families
- The playing field for discipline
- Mark Perlman, Neil Tift and Lisa Nitsch were fabulous. Wendy Rickman was also great.
- The presenters and the resources at the exhibit
- Lunch panel and hearing what is going on in my community.
- The morning sessions were proactive. The luncheon session was a loss, even slightly detrimental.
- The after lunch talk blew the afternoon for me.
- Discussion among participants & presenters
- Good conference. Great notebooks! Morning speakers--different perspectives
- The diversity of participants, organizations and topics. Adding the faith-based groups was a very powerful piece
- Meeting other people from other agencies who also deal with male issues, fatherhood, etc. Also the videos--meth man--kids who shared about feelings of what a father should be and how a father should act.
- For agencies (DHS) had a big part in some fathers not being in the home.
- All of it was very informative, knowledgeable, gained valuable information to use in my agency.
- Resources available to fathers within the community. The needs for fatherhood services.
- Practical tips to use in the field
- Understanding the different programs out there and we all need to get more involved.
- Seeing that so many people care about fatherhood
- Discuss the real importance of fathers in the home.
- Maternal vs paternal parenting skills
- Listening to research, the speakers, and hearing of the personal stories/effects on people
- The story regarding elephants; personal stories
- My husband came with me and he really enjoyed it & found it beneficial. You guys did a great job! Thank you.
- The information provided on how to be a good parent
- Information not only for families I work with, but for myself. The father of my 2 sons (ages 8 & 3) will be released from prison in April 2009.
- That I was fortunate enough to grow-up with a wonderful hands-on father--and that my children have been cheated by the choices I made.

**What was missing? What other topics are of interest to you for any future conference on fathers and families?**

- Excellent conference/forum with interesting discussion, perspectives, and initiatives
- Very narrow in discussion & direction. The focus says identify gaps in services & resources. I didn't see that. Stimulate ideas about changes in individuals & organizations. I didn't see this.
- Parking was an issue with me--simply because a lot of folks were at Drake for state track meet.
- Personally, I did not find the "reactor panel" particularly helpful.
- The homophobic & promise keeper's attitude--strong Christian faith component was not necessary & somewhat offensive. Very out of place. Could have been done in a better way. As a Christian I am also offended by the "sermons" after lunch. How much more segregation can we add to this?
- I would rather have heard from Judge Nickerson and his judicial point of view at the luncheon session. This was a missed chance for a holistic conference.
- Ability to bring "consumers" to the table. Good to hear what we're doing, but how is it working, what could we do better from their standpoint?
- More hands on & direction on how to get dads involved
- More on a plan to interact with fathers & fathers to interact with kids & mother. It would be nice to have a 2-parent family but if you don't how can you make it work for your children?
- I agree that 2 parent households are important, but it simply is not a reality for many of my clients. Practical advice for keeping dads involved despite problems with the mother would be helpful at future conferences.
- Specific practices to change; evaluation/assessment of individual agencies and partnerships within the geographic area; Action plan with accountability built in
- More information about the effects and other problems of the lack of African American Fathers in their family's lives and in the community.
- Rights & Responsibilities of young fathers in Iowa--I picked up the hand book but would love to see some professionals who are directly involved in this area.
- Addressing issues of teen fathers
- How are fathers going to be able to play catch-up with child support?
- Discussions on legal issues pertaining to child support and visitation
- How to engage and work with fathers in prison
- Personal stories from fathers and their experiences with the child welfare system & the criminal justice system
- Custody Options; Making 50/50 custody most effective for the children vs convenience for the parents
- Cultural issues--I work with Hispanic parents & it would be nice to hear about fatherhood in other cultures
- More displays
- More goodies

### **Additional comments?**

- Overall, this program was very resourceful and empowering to every individual and organization
- Great information! Love the fact Iowa is finally getting on board with fatherhood issues
- Worthwhile overall.
- Hope that more things (programs) will be started to assist fathers with back child support. (If they did not feel that they could not be in the home just so that the women could get additional help, they may not be behind in payments.
- Overall, this was an excellent conference! Thank you for all. I need this!
- This was a good conference--I sincerely appreciate being able to come.
- Excellent conference, very informative, sharing of information, enjoyed the reactor panels--good idea.
- Lots of great information, ideas & input that will help me be more effective for the families I work with as well as my own sons.
- Lisa should slow down.
- Conference had little useful, practical information. I've been working with families for 20+ years and was hoping to get useful information for the fathers I work with and was sorely disappointed.
- Some of the luncheon panelists comments were heartfelt, but out of place. Please communicate there is a time & place for personal "message". Thank you!
- Present the issues not your religious viewpoint.
- The luncheon session was waylaid by personal emotion and religious belief. I have no understanding of what the purpose of the session was. The ball was clearly dropped.
- As a non-Christian I was very uncomfortable with the tone of the conference, particularly during the lunch session. More than specific comments the phrasing of the conversation among panelists/moderator. "Thank God", "Ministry", that made me feel excluded. The panelists who were openly Christian dominated the time, the strictly professional panelists were silent.
- Too much time in one spot! Breakout sessions. Such good content, not enough time--make it 2 days.
- Need more short breaks throughout the day. More organized registration process.
- More breaks would have helped. Way too long to sit--especially with a working lunch.
- Better time management
- Registration was unorganized.
- When I tried to email my conference registration, it didn't work. Phoning didn't work--I didn't receive a confirmation of registering until last week.
- E-mail address didn't work.
- Better slide transitions; remind attendees to turn cell phones to vibrate
- Technical difficulties--person running laptop should know how to operate it.
- Mid-year or fall is a better time for the conference.
- Parking was tough.
- Track meet is going on, parking was a struggle
- State track meet was a negative
- Don't have it during the state track meet
- Too many carb options--needed vegetables.
- Too cold

## TABLE TOPICS

**QUESTION 1. What can be done to support fathers and help them to be more involved in their children's lives? (Describe ways you; your agency, employer or faith organization; and your community can support fathers.)**

**A. I can ...**

- Develop relations with principal of school & faith community
- Be available; be present
- Breakdown stereotypes in the workplace

**B. My agency, employer or faith organization can ...**

- Work with the school guidance counselors and principals; work with the schools.
- Foster opportunities to be available as individuals, as groups, and as mentors
- Recognize the differences between men & women
- Recognize that diversity issues are broad and not just black/white, men/women, city/country, etc.

**C. My community can ...**

**QUESTION 2. What are the resource gaps facing father involvement in the community?**

- Access to money & resources
- Access to legal counsel
- Access to visitation/mediator
- Men understanding how to access services
- Do fathers understand how to access the services?
- Communication between the person needing assistance and the agency providing services
- Men willing to access (pride). Pride is an issue for signing up for services/assistance
- Advertising what services are available
- Advertising/public service
- Networking
- Education of dads in their importance—dad's don't know
- Groups are specifically for moms—need similar groups for dads
- Support groups for dads
- Parent Partner program in Des Moines. Expand to work with dads facing system issues
- Biases in community regarding fathers prevents their involvement in these services
- Services focused toward women—lack of access or understanding that men can access them as well.
- MOPS—Time out for mom—mommy day out

**QUESTION 3. How can some of the barriers facing fathers be removed?**

- Tell what resources are available
- Remove mindsets
- Child support
- More interactive time with dads in prison (More appropriate visiting areas in jails to promote contact). Mitchellville, Ft. Dodge, Rockwell City are piloting child friendly visitation areas.
- Inside/Out dads
- Educate dads on how important they are
- DHS historically focus on mom as custodians—we need to focus more on dads & how they contribute to safety, stability, permanency, & well-being.
- Groups specifically for fathers
- Recruitment strategies promotional materials.
- No African-American males on Coalition Steering Committee

**QUESTION 4. What kind of help is needed to support fatherhood efforts?**

**A. For me as an individual, I need ...**

**B. For my agency, employer or faith organization, we need ...**

**C. For our community, we need ...**

- To be involved with the legislature
- To create mentoring opportunities for men
- To make the system more user friendly. Currently the system isn't there for men—We need to make it easier for men.
- To share the fatherhood statistics with the community.
- To develop media showing a child's perspective.
- To develop services for soldiers coming home from war who have been disconnected as fathers. By getting more information out in the community on initiatives to help them come back; and working with the Veteran's Administration
- To encourage agencies to include men in their décor—e.g. pictures of fathers on walls, etc.
- To rename WIC to PIC—Parents/Infants/Children

**QUESTION 5. With what you learned today, what will you do to benefit children and impact fathers?**

- Recognize that we have a common mission—Kids
- Trust other agencies—take them at face value if they come to the table
- Don't spread yourselves too thin. Keep your eyes on priorities
- Maintain an involved fatherhood movement
- Avoid competitiveness—Keep an eye on the vision
- Look at your own “stuff”
- Weave promising practices into your work
- Implement a win/win philosophy
- Develop support networks. Guys need to hear from other guys.